

Your Child's Development From 6 to 12 Months

This information lists the skills your child will likely learn between 6 and 12 months.

Movement and physical development

Between 6 and 12 months, your child may learn to:

- Put things in their mouth.
- Hit 2 objects together.
- Easily move things from 1 hand to the other.
- Pick things up with their thumb and index finger.
- Sit without support.
- Get into a sitting position without help.
- Crawl.
- Pull up to stand.
- Stay standing when holding on to an object or person.
- Walk while holding on to furniture. This is also known as cruising.
- Take steps while someone is holding their hands.

Social-emotional and self-help skills

Between 6 and 12 month, your child may:

- Notice and pay attention to their own body, including their hands, feet, and face.
- Be clingy with adults they know.
- Be afraid of strangers.
- Repeat activities they like to do.

- Lift their arms to their parents.
- Respond playfully to looking at a mirror.
- Have favorite things and people.
- Show dislike for certain toys or people.
- Extend toys out in front of them to show others.
- Hold their own bottle.
- Eat food with their fingers.
- Nap 1 to 2 times during the day.
- Let you dress them without resisting.

Learning, thinking, and problem solving skills

Between 6 and 12 months, your child may:

- Show interest in sounds or objects.
- Play peek-a-boo.
- Play with the same toy for 2 to 3 minutes.
- Watch something as it falls.
- Respond to facial expressions.
- Look at the right picture or thing when it's named.
- Find hidden things easily.
- Throw objects.
- Listen to speech without getting distracted.
- Understand the word "no."
- Take apart toys, such as puzzles or ring sets.
- Show curiosity for things they cannot reach.
- Sit upright during feeding.
- Tighten their lips around a spoon.
- Start to eat solid foods with their fingers.
- Start chewing their food.
- Sip from a cup if someone holds the cup for them.

- Start to eat thicker, more textured food.

Speech, language, and communication skills

Between 6 and 12 months, your child may:

- Make different sounds like “mamamama” and “bababababa.”
- Make sounds with changes in tone. This will start to sound like they are speaking.
- Respond to their own name.
- Turn and look in the direction of sounds.
- Look when you point.
- Understand words for common items and people, such as cup, truck, or juice.
- Start to respond to simple words and phrases, such as “no,” “come here,” and “want more?.”
- Play games with you, such as peek-a-boo and hand games.
- Listen to songs and stories for a short time.
- Use sounds and gestures to get and keep attention.
- Point to objects and show them to others.
- Use hand gestures and motions like waving bye, reaching for “up,” and shaking their head to say no.
- Copy different speech sounds.
- Say 1 or 2 words.
- Shake their head yes or no.

What you can do to help your child’s development

Your child may not have a lot of energy during their treatment. But it’s still important to help them move, communicate, and play as part of their daily routine. Here are some things you can do to help them:

- Place toys at different heights (such as on furniture or behind your child) around the room to get your child to move and change positions.
- Once your child begins standing, help them practice walking by holding them around their waist.

- Give your child toys that gets them to use both hands.
- Use toys that gets your child to take objects out of a container and put them back inside.
- Hold items out of reach to get your child to ask for them by pointing and babbling.
- Leave words out of familiar songs and wait for your child to make a sound to continue the song.
- Read books with flaps, textures, and activities. Engage your child in the book by asking them questions, such as “what is that?.”

When to call your child’s healthcare provider

Call your child’s healthcare provider if your child:

- Uses only 1 hand to play.
- Does not like to change positions.
- Cannot sit without support.
- Has trouble crawling or does not crawl.
- Does not respond to their own name.
- Does not point to things.
- Loses skills they once had.
- Does not like changes in their environment, such as changes to the noise level or lighting in the room.
- Is not pointing or reaching for objects.
- Is not cooing (making a soft murmuring sound) or babbling.
- Is not transitioning to solid foods.

Contact information

If you have questions about your child's development, talk with their healthcare provider. You can also ask for a referral to MSK's physical, occupational, or speech therapy.

You can reach MSK's Physical and Occupational Therapy department Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at 212-639-5384. You can reach the Speech and Hearing Rehabilitation department Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 212-639-5856.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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